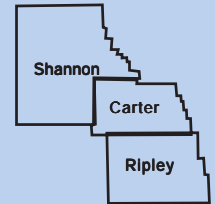




Conservation Currents



MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

PROJECTS, ISSUES AND PROGRAMS IN SHANNON, CARTER AND RIPLEY COUNTIES

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

Ö RIPLEY COUNTY PUBLIC LAND

Ö TREE PLANTING TIPS

Ö BETTER POND FISHING

Ö CARING FOR YOUR OUTDOOR EQUIPMENT

Ö OZARK WATERFOWL

Ö ATTRACTING WINTER WILDLIFE

Current Conversations

Tom Draper
Forestry Regional Supervisor

Carter, Ripley and Shannon are some of the most unique counties found in Missouri. Each has significant natural features and important wild places. Many private individuals own land in these three counties and several government agencies hold land in public trust. Often times residents of these counties wonder how public ownership affects the county and its residents. Several interesting points can be made about the Missouri Department of Conservation's (MDC) presence in Carter, Ripley and Shannon County.

A total of 33 employees live in the three counties with 6 living in Carter, 20 living in Shannon County and 7 living in Ripley County. All are actively involved in managing the natural resources found on public and private lands for both Missouri citizens and absentee landowners.



Folks also wonder how many acres MDC holds in public trust in the three county area. There is a total of 1.4 million acres located in these three counties. MDC holds in public trust a little more than 171,000 acres. Statements are made many times alluding to the fact the Department pays no taxes to the individual counties for the land found in those counties. That statement is not exactly true. In fact, MDC paid a total of \$117,006.02 in tax payments to the three counties during 2004. Tax payments are made in the form of In-Lieu-Tax payments, Forest Cropland Payments and Levee and Drainage Board Tax payments.

In-lieu-tax program payments are based upon the higher of the taxes paid on a tract of land at the time of acquisition by the Conservation

Commission or a calculated rate modeled after the State Tax Commission rule for valuing agriculture lands. Forest Cropland payments are based upon the State Forestry Law. County commissions are also assisted with county road maintenance under the County Aid Road Trust or CART program. A notable project completed in Shannon County using CART funds was the repair of a low water crossing near Chrisco Cemetery.

You might wonder what other opportunities and services the Missouri Department of Conservation provides to county residents. The Department works closely with the 22 rural fire departments found throughout Carter, Shannon and Ripley Counties. As in much of rural

Missouri, your friends and neighbors are the volunteers that provide fire protection in these three counties. The purpose of assisting rural fire departments is to provide financial and technical assistance for organizing, training and equipping these departments. MDC through state and federal funds,

distributes matching grants to volunteer fire departments for personnel protective clothing, wildfire suppression and communications equipment. In addition to grants, the Department works to acquire and coordinate the use of Federal Excess Equipment for use in fire suppression by rural fire departments. This program loans equipment to rural fire departments and 35 fire suppression vehicles are on loan to the 22 fire departments found throughout Carter, Shannon and Ripley Counties. Rural fire Departments also have on loan other fire fighting equipment such as pumps, water tanks, hand tools, protective gear and communications equipment. Last year alone the Department made available equipment valued at ten million dollars to rural fire departments throughout Missouri.

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"MDC paid a total of \$117,006.02 in tax payments to the three counties during 2004."

One other program that benefits residents in the three county area is the Community Assistance Program. The CAP program was initiated in 1980 to provide close to home fishing opportunities throughout the state. Under terms of a cooperative agreement, the Department provides fisheries management assistance on lakes and ponds, provides enforcement of wildlife and area use regulations and arranges for most of the funding required for facilities development. The partners, in return, assist with facilities development; allow free public use of the area under agreement for fishing, boating and other related recreational activities. Partners also provide routine maintenance

and law enforcement. Existing Community Assistance Program agreements in this county include the Van Buren Riverfront Park, Two Rivers Access on the Ozark Scenic Riverways, the planned boat/canoe access at the City Park Access in Eminence and the T. L. Wright Memorial Access in Doniphan.

As you can see, the Department has many other programs beyond holding land in public trust for Missourians. Also, the Department is always looking for willing partners to assist in the stewardship of Missouri's unique wild treasures.

Forestry

FOURCHE CREEK CONSERVATION AREA



Steve Paes Resource Forester

The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) owns approximately 8,000 acres in Ripley County. The largest property is the 3,800 acre Fourche Creek Conservation Area in the southwest portion of the county. It consists of four relatively small tracts and 3,000 acres bordering the state line on either side of Hwy. P. A map of the area can be found on MDC's website, <http://www.mdc.state.mo.us/>. From there, select the link "How can I find Conservation areas near my home". Then select "Conservation Atlas database". Selecting Fourche Creek from that page will link you to a map.

Fourche Creek has a unique history in that most of the area has never been in private ownership. The University of Missouri obtained the area in 1862 from the Federal government under the Agricultural College Act. This Act granted the U.S. government the authority to establish land grant colleges and give the colleges land to sell to generate funds to support themselves. After being given the land, the University paid little attention to it during its 100 years of ownership. A notable exception to this was when the University granted acreage for Gatewood School. MDC bought the property from the University in 1965, but it is still known as the "Ag land" or "Agriculture land" by some residents of the county.

When MDC purchased the tract in 1965, the majority of the timber was 40-60 years old. At present, most of the big trees on the area are 80-100 years old. If the University never cut trees during its ownership of the land, where did all the "old" trees go? This question can

best be answered by an elderly gentleman who once told me "many a family made it through the Depression on that Ag land". As in the rest of the Ozarks, much of the merchantable timber was harvested in the first half of the 20th century.

MDC purchased the property to establish a multiple-use state forest. The forest is managed to improve tree growth and diversify wildlife habitats. Early forest management activities included converting old fields and stands of poor quality hardwoods to pine. More recent management has consisted of timber harvests and prescribed burns. The timber harvests reduce overcrowding, regenerate stands of low quality and mature trees, and produce more forage and cover for wildlife. The prescribe burns keep old fields open and productive for wildlife and enhance growth of grasses and wildflowers on sites with poor soils. Nineteen wildlife watering holes have also been constructed.

Timber harvests have been increased over the last five years. The reason for this is that many of the red oaks in the forest are mature and in declining health. Regeneration harvests are being used in some stands while others are being thinned to harvest declining trees and promote the growth of white oaks, which are longer lived species than the red oaks.

For more information on this area you can write to the Missouri Department of Conservation, RR8 Box 8118, Doniphan, MO 63935 or call (573-996-2557).

"At present, most of the big trees on the area are 80-100 years old."



Private Lands

THINKING ABOUT PLANTING TREES?



Don Foerster
Private Lands Conser-
vationist

Tree planting is more than sticking seedlings in the ground. What species of trees are you going to plant? What kind of equipment is needed to plant the trees? What kind of site preparation is necessary? How are you going to control animal damage and weeds? Where are you going to get your trees? What time of the year is the best time to plant? A little research and a good plan will insure the success of your tree planting.

It is important to select tree species that meet your goals and grow well on your site. Trees will grow and survive better if they are planted in areas where they naturally occur. Soils play an important role in where certain species grow best. Some trees provide shade, others are valuable for lumber, others produce food for wildlife and some have flowers. Before ordering tree seedlings, give some consideration to the species you wish to plant. University of Missouri Extension publication G5006 *Before You Order Tree Seedlings* has more information on the selecting the right trees.

The planting equipment needed will depend on site conditions and the number of trees you want to plant. If the site is covered with grass sod, some type of spray rig will be necessary to kill the grass to keep it from competing with the trees. A dibble bar will be sufficient if planting twenty five trees. If you are planting several thousand trees a mechanical tree planter pulled by a tractor will save time and make the tree planting much easier.

Preparing the site is another important part of successful tree planting. During October and November is the time to spray sites that have fescue and other cool season grasses. The removal of plants that compete with seedlings for nutrients, water and sunlight will give trees a good healthy start.

Young seedlings are tasty browse for deer and cattle. Keeping cattle away from your planting is the easy. Fence them out. Deer on the other hand are more difficult. If the planting is small you may need to place fencing around each seedling. For large plantings consider planting a green browse plot of wheat, alfalfa, and clover some distance away from the tree planting. This plot will not keep deer out of the planting but may reduce the amount of damage by providing a more succulent browse.

Weed control must be considered when you are planning tree spacing. Room must be given to get equipment between rows for mechanical and/or chemical weed control. If you use a mechanical method remember tree seedlings cut as easy as weeds.

Tree seedlings may be ordered from commercial nurseries or from Missouri Department of Conservation George O. White State Forest Nursery (1-877-521-8632). Please order seedlings early to ensure delivery by March which is the best month to plant in south central Missouri.

For more information about planting trees contact a MDC Forester or a Private Lands Conservationist in your area.

"Weed control must be considered when you are planning tree spacing."



"If the site is covered with grass sod, some type of spray rig will be necessary to kill the grass to keep it from competing with the trees."



Montana Deluxe Skunk Off

If you are a dog owner in the Ozarks and your dog likes to spend time outdoors, then it is almost a given that

sooner or later your canine will tassel with a skunk. I have tried MANY recipes for ridding the nasty odor; tomato juice, lemon juice, commercial products, but non did the job effectively. Prior to a pheasant hunting trip to North Dakota a friend

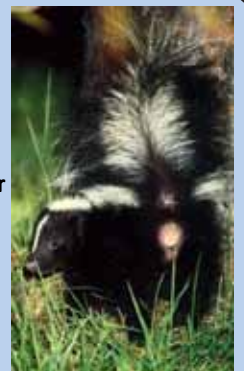
of mine from Montana recommended this homemade recipe. On that trip, my pointer wasn't two hours out of the dog box and she got sprayed. I can tell you first hand THIS RECIPE WORKS!!!

1 BOTTLE HYDROGEN
PEROXIDE
1 BOTTLE WATER
1 CUP BAKING SODA
1 TABLESPOON SHAMPOO

Pour the peroxide in a bucket
Add equal amount of water
Add baking soda
Add shampoo
Mix contents in bucket and use a rag or sponge to soak dog with this solution. Let set on dog for 15 min, then rinse.

Dave Mayers

Dogs and Skunks

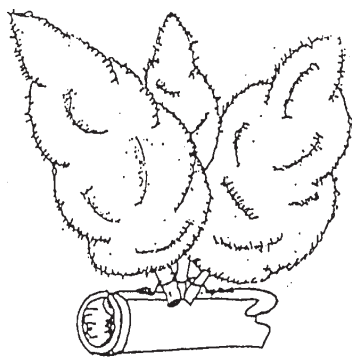


Fisheries

FISHING POND WINTER TUNE-UP



"Fish need cover to rest, spawn, and hide from predators."



"Don't place cover in the deepest water because dissolved oxygen levels during summer may be too low to support fish life."

Dave Mayers Fisheries Management Biologist

The dead of winter is not the typical time when pond owners think about fishing, but it is a great time to prepare your pond or lake for next spring fishing season by giving it a tune-up. One of the most common deficiencies I see in small ponds and lakes is the lack of fish habitat. A pond scraped down to a clay bottom and filled with water is, to the fish living there, nothing more than a wet bathtub. Fish need cover to rest, spawn, and hide from predators. Cover can be natural plants or man made structures such as brush piles. Either type of cover provides food for fish by creating a home for larval aquatic insects. Small fish come to the cover to eat the insects and bigger fish station themselves nearby to feed on the smaller fish; a natural food chain is created.

Adding fish cover to your pond will help increase the carrying capacity of the water and serve as fishing hotspots. In most cases, your goal will simply be to provide underwater cover of some sort which will initiate and support a food chain. Cover can be constructed of a variety of materials, such as wooden stakes, logs, concrete blocks, rocks, drain tiles, wooden pallets, and prefabricated plastic pipes. Natural materials like brush and trees are the most economical and effective attractors.

Almost any type of tree can be used to make attractors, but the best are brushy trees such as osage orange, pin oak, post oak, and cedar. Firewood cutting leftovers and Christmas trees are also excellent candidates for brush piles. Trees can be anchored with rocks or concrete blocks. Anchors can be tied to the

trees using plastic banding, polypropylene rope or Number 9 wire, or any material that will not rust or rot.

The easiest time to install brush piles is while the pond is being built. A bulldozer can quickly build several by pushing downed trees together during construction. Timber left standing in the lake will also create a natural fish habitat.

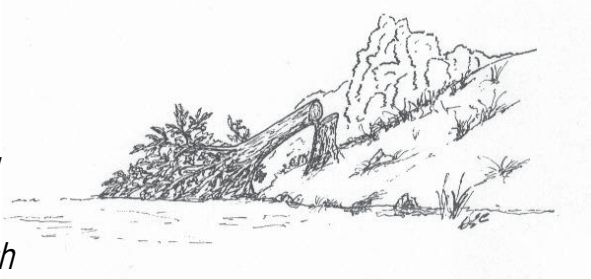
For existing lakes and ponds, trees can be towed into place with a boat. For small ponds a farm tractor can be used to pull materials across the pond into desired location. Three or four trees can provide adequate cover if they cover an area about 10 by 15 feet, or larger. Grouping trees to make one large brush pile is more effective than having individual trees spread out over the entire lake.

Don't place cover in the deepest water because dissolved oxygen levels during summer may be too low to support fish life. For most small lakes and ponds, place the cover no deeper than 10 to 12 feet. Stack tree limbs or stand trees up on the bottom by placing weight only at the butt of a tree. A higher profile creates more usable fish cover.

Natural cover decomposes and needs periodic replacement. Softwood trees last about 7 years and some hardwoods can remain up to 30 years.

So this winter tune-up your fishing pond with some quality fish habitat. Your fish will have a better place to live and come next spring your fishing luck just may get better.

"Cover can be natural plants or man made structures such as brush piles."



PVC pipe can provide long lasting fish attracting structures.

Protection

PROTECT YOUR OUTDOOR EQUIPMENT



Brad Hadley Conservation Agent

Most fall and winter hunting seasons have closed and the lull of winter that slows or stops many outdoor activities is here. Instead of anticipating upcoming seasons, we resign ourselves to being content with memories of those just past. But before you hunker down to await spring, remember this is an excellent time to inventory and inspect outdoor equipment.

Outdoor recreation can require a substantial investment in equipment. Consider a short list of possibilities: fishing tackle; guns, bows, arrows, and tree stands; tents, sleeping bags, and Coleman stoves; boats and motors; GPS units, binoculars, dog boxes, and fish cookers. For all of these one thing is certain: missing, faulty, inoperable, or inadequate parts can quickly turn a dream trip into a nightmare trip.

Common sense dictates we do what is necessary to "protect" our investments. For outdoor equipment, protection not only saves money, but possibly lives. Missing life jackets should be replaced not only to comply with boating laws, but because you never know when an "extra" one will be needed. Another boating consideration is the trailer. If you have ever pulled a trailer you how frustrating trailer lights can be. Making sure lights are in working order ensures other drivers can see that you are turning or stopping and may prevent you being rear-ended. Climbing tree stands are popular partly because they are light and easy to carry on ATVs or in the back of a pickup. All this banging around may warp or bend parts on the stand. Always take a minute to be sure

your stand is in top shape. It is obvious that most outdoor equipment should be given a quick inspection before use. Having a mental "checklist" for each piece of equipment should be a priority.

Another aspect of protection is routine maintenance, which should be performed according to schedule. If the recommendation is to pack the wheel bearings on your boat or ATV trailer 5000 miles, it's because the manufacturer has tested the product and knows its limitations. Keep track of the miles and pack the bearings as soon as you hit the 5000 mark. Routine maintenance is probably the best protection for your investment because it allows you to get the full lifetime of optimum performance from the equipment.

A final consideration is security. Get a head start in recovering property lost to theft by compiling a list of identifying characters, such as make, model, and serial numbers. Photographic "inventory lists" should be kept in a safe place away from your home, such as a safe deposit box. Another excellent idea is to engrave your own unique identifier on some part of the equipment that is normally hidden from view. Don't use your name, but rather some number that is meaningful only to you (last 4 digits of your SSN, child's birth date, etc.). Equipment that will not take engraving may be marked with a permanent marker.

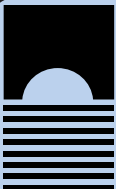
Outdoor activities are relaxing but sometimes require expensive equipment. Before packing things away in the garage until winter breaks, take a little time to inventory, inspect, and protect this equipment. Doing so will mean it will already be ready in good working order when you need it. It might also make the difference that keeps you and others safe.



"...missing, faulty, inoperable, or inadequate parts can quickly turn a dream trip into a nightmare trip."



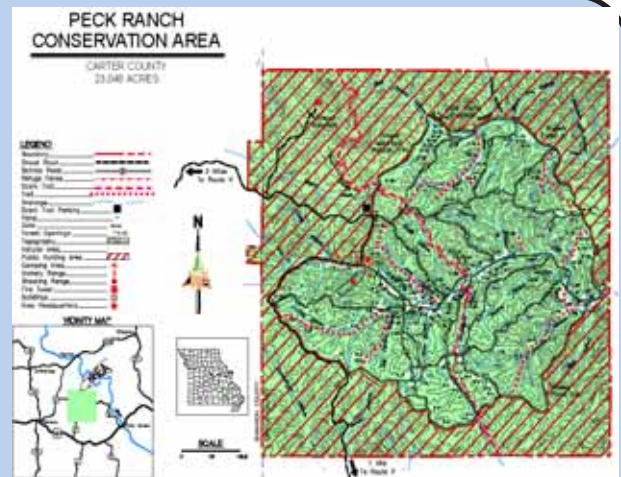
"Before packing things away in the garage until winter breaks, take a little time to inventory, inspect, and protect this equipment."



Need an MDC Area Map or Brochure?

If you have a computer and printer you can download a MDC area map and brochure quickly and easily. Go to www.mdc.state.mo.us and click on the "Atlas" link on the left side of the page. Type in the area name or search by county. Not all areas are in the atlas database yet, but more are being added all the time.

These maps and brochure provide information about features found on the area as well as facilities, activities, land cover, trail and road maps.



Wildlife

WATERFOWL WINGING THEIR WAY THROUGH THE OZARKS



"Soon thousands of ducks and geese will begin filtering through the Missouri Ozarks."



"The Mississippi flyway is the longest migration route of any in the Western Hemisphere."

Rhonda Rimer
Natural History Bilogist

As I was driving through Carter County the other day, I caught my first glimpse of Canada geese in this Ozarks this year. Soon thousands of ducks and geese will begin filtering through the Missouri Ozarks. Shorebirds, blackbirds, sparrows, warblers and thrushes will also migrate. Most species follow a path known as the Mississippi flyway. The eastern boundary of the Mississippi flyway runs through the peninsula of southern Ontario to western Lake Erie, then southwestwardly across Ohio and Indiana to the Mississippi River where it follows the river to its mouth. The western boundary runs loosely through eastern Nebraska and western Missouri and Arkansas. This flyway is the longest migration route of any in the Western Hemisphere. Its northern end is on the Arctic coast of Alaska and its southern end in Patagonia. Well timbered and watered, the entire region has ideal conditions for migrating birds. The two rivers that mark the flyway, the Mackenzie emptying at the Arctic coast and the Mississippi at the Gulf of Mexico, have a general north-and-south direction, another factor in determining the importance of this route.

Ducks and geese that travel along the Mississippi flyway in fall are coming from their nesting areas in the upper Midwest and Canada. When ponds and lakes in the north start to freeze, food becomes scarce and ducks and

geese start moving southward to warmer climates.

Blue-winged teal and pintails are the first ducks to arrive in the fall. The teal's powder blue wing patches and the pintail's sharply pointed tail feathers make them easy to identify as they feed in ponds and marshes.

November's chilly winds will push these birds further south, but by then large numbers of mallards will be here. Large flocks of Canada geese will arrive in early winter. Finally, snow geese pass through the area in December.

Now that the weather is turning chilly, listen carefully on clear nights. It's likely you will hear the lonesome honking of a flock of Canada geese as they look for a place to fill their bellies and rest their weary wings.



Hooded Merganser

Education

WILDLIFE IN WINTER



"Some Native American tribes have called the January full moon the 'Hunger Moon'."

Jennifer Ferris
Conservation Education Consultant

Winter officially begins on December 21st, with the Winter Solstice, the shortest day of the year. During this time of the year, the earth in the Northern Hemisphere is tilted the farthest away from the sun. On the Winter Solstice the sun at midday reaches its lowest position of the year. After this, the sun will gradually raise its path across the sky and the days will lengthen as the earth tilts slowly back toward the sun, heading once more toward summer.

What happens to the animals outdoors in win-

ter when we are warm and snug in our homes? Many animals find a warm shelter and sleep away the cold months. If an animal goes into so deep a sleep that its heartbeat and its breathing slow down and its body temperature drops, we call this hibernation. Hibernating animals live off of their own stored energy and do not wake until spring.

Woodchucks (groundhogs) hibernate, snoozing the entire winter away in burrows they dug into the ground in early fall. Chipmunks, on the other hand, are light hibernators, waking occasionally to eat stored food or to poke above ground on warm days.

Continued on page 7

Animals that do not hibernate or migrate to warmer climates must remain active. They put on extra layers of fat and grow thicker coats. Generally, these animals sleep during the day and are out hunting for food at night. Winter is a good time to learn which animals are in your neighborhood. You can often find their tracks in mud or snow. Deer, foxes, raccoons, and skunks are a few of the animals that are active during the winter months.

January can be the coldest and harshest month for animals. Some Native American tribes have called the January full moon the "Hunger Moon". You can help wildlife survive the cold winter months and enjoy the beauty and excitement of wildlife viewing. One way to do this is to recycle your cut Christmas tree by placing it in a pond for fish habitat, or piling several together to provide brushy cover for rabbits, quail, or songbirds. Your Christmas tree can be cleaned of all man-made debris (tinsel, ornaments, etc.) and "re-decorated" with edible treats for our wildlife friends in your own yard. Using a needle and thread, make a long string of cranberries and popcorn to hang on the tree. Make suet chunks by placing suet (meat fat, available at your grocery store) in an old onion bag or chicken wire mesh for woodpeckers and nuthatches to eat. Children

enjoy cutting shapes such as hearts, from slices of bread with cookie cutters, dipping them in egg and pressing bird seed onto the bread. Poke a hole in the top, string colorful yarn through, and once dry, hang on your "After-Christmas Tree". You can even scatter some birdseed around under the tree for the birds that prefer to eat their meals on the ground. Providing a source of fresh, unfrozen water can be of utmost importance to many animals during severe cold snaps, too.

Once decorated, sit back and enjoy watching the wildlife that visits your tree.

Use a field guide and binoculars to help in identification of animal visitors. You can even keep a journal of the different birds you attract. But, by all means, don't feel that winter has to be a time you must stay inside. Put on your coat, hat, and gloves and head outside for a wonderful winter hike. Spot bird nests or hornets' nests in the bare trees, look for animal tracks, or listen for the mating calls of owls on a cold, clear night. Winter is a wonderful and important time in our natural cycle of the seasons. Find some ways to connect with nature during these chilly months; it can be inspiring, invigorating, and energizing!



*Flicker (above),
Cardinal (below)*



Outdoor Calendar

Hunting

	Opens	Closes
Groundhog	5/9/05	12/15/05
Coyote	5/9/05	3/31/06
Squirrel	5/28/05	2/15/06
Rabbit	10/01/05	2/15/06
Deer/Turkey Archery	9/15/05 11/23/05	11/11/05 1/15/06
Deer Muzzleloader	11/25/05	12/04/05
Deer Antlerless Firearms	12/10/05	12/18/05

Fishing

	Opens	Closes
Black Bass (impoundments)	Open All Year	----
Black Bass (streams, Current Jacks Fork and their tributaries)	5/28/05	2/28/06
Trout Management Areas	Open All Year	----
Trout Parks	3/1/06	10/31/06
Gigging Nongame Fish (streams)	9/15/05	1/31/06

Resident Hunting Permit

Prices

Hunting and Fishing ---	\$19
Small Game ---	\$10
Youth Deer and Turkey ---	\$17
Archery Hunting ---	\$19
Firearms Any Deer ---	\$17
Firearms First Bonus Deer ---	\$7
Firearms Second Bonus Deer ---	\$7
Fall Firearms Turkey ---	\$13
Spring Turkey ---	\$17
Trapping ---	\$10

Resident Fishing Permit Prices

Hunting and Fishing ---	\$19
Fishing ---	\$12
Trout ---	\$7



We are on the web. To view this newsletter go to www.mdc.mo.gov and click on the Ozark portion of the map located at the bottom of web page.



We're on the Web!
WWW.CONSERVATION.STATE.MO.US



MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

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P.O. Box 138
 551 Joe Jones Blvd.
 West Plains, MO 65775
 Phone: 417/256-7161
 Fax: 417/256-0429

Central Office

P.O. Box 180
 2901 W. Truman Blvd.
 Jefferson City, MO
 65109
 Phone: 573/751-4115

MDC Mission

- To protect and manage the fish, forest, and wildlife resources of the state,
- To serve the public and facilitate their participation in resource management activities,
- To provide opportunity for all citizens to use, enjoy, and learn about fish, forest, and wildlife resources.

Mission of This Newsletter

The mission of this newsletter is to share current information about conservation projects, issues, and programs and to develop working relationships with the citizens of Shannon, Carter, and Ripley Counties.

Share Your Thoughts

If there are any subjects you would like to see in the *Conservation Currents* please contact Scott Stephens or have any questions pertaining to the Wildlife Code please contact the Conservation Agent assigned to your county. County assignments and phone numbers are listed below.

Operation Game Thief and Operation Forest Arson

Sponsored by the Conservation Federation of Missouri, the Missouri Dept. of Conservation and the U.S. Forest Service

Phone: 1-800-392-1111

CONTACT OFFICES AND NAMES

If you have a question about any of the following topics, here are your contact professionals:

Shannon Co. Field Office
 573/226-3616



Carter Co. Field Office
 573/323-8515



Ripley Co. Field Office
 573/996-2557



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 Dennis Hutchison 573/226-3616

Forestry

John Tuttle 573/323-8515

Forestry

Steve Paes 573/996-2557

Private Land Management:

Mike Gaskins 573/226-3241

Private Land Management:

Don Foerster 573/996-3619

Private Land Management:

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 Kim Houf 573/323-4249
 Rhonda Rimer 417/256-7161

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Dan Drees 573/226-3616
 Kim Houf 573/323-4249
 Rhonda Rimer 417/256-7161

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 Kim Houf 573/323-4249
 Rhonda Rimer 417/256-7161

Fisheries

Dave Mayers 417/256-7161

Fisheries

Dave Mayers 417/256-7161

Fisheries

Dave Mayers 417/256-7161

Conservation Education

Melanie Carden-Jensen 417/256-7161

Conservation Education

Jennifer Ferris 573/840-9788

Conservation Education

Jennifer Ferris 573/840-9788

Outdoor Skills

Larry Lindeman 417/256-7161

Outdoor Skills

Larry Lindeman 417/256-7161

Outdoor Skills

Larry Lindeman 417/256-7161